

Why Dancers Are So Dangerous

Science Explains Their Fascination by
Their Power to Awaken Primitive
Dreams of Conquest Created
by the First Priestesses When
Men Still Lived in Caves



Ida Rubinstein, Who Won Gabriele d'Annunzio's Devoted Friendship from the Incomparable Duse.
(And Above) Gaby Deslys, Who Kicked Over Portugal's Throne with the Toe of Her Pink Satin Slipper.

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RECENTLY the names of dancers in increasing numbers have appeared in cases of divorce and love alienation. The frequency of the phenomenon led to a statistical inquiry, with the surprising discovery that dancers are, as a class, fully 20 per cent ahead of any other class in furnishing domestic and undomestic upheavals.

The question of why this is so has been raised, and its answer furnishes one of the most interesting explanations of modern psychology.

Many eminent psychologists believe that the dance is not only the oldest religious rite, but the oldest form of amusement, and the oldest form of mental stimulation known. These scientists hold that when a man was still in the cave-age he was heavy witted, brutish, with only a rudimentary imagination. To enable him to advance, to plan conquests, both of other men and of nature, stimulation of his imagination was necessary. He who could plan ahead was the one who won.

Just, they argue, as at a certain stage of childhood a girl develops imagination faster than a boy, so in the childhood of man, woman out-tripped him in the same development.

With this development of imagination came natural mimicry. Woman imitated the natural things about her, and she did it in the form of dance, which is unquestionably the most natural form of emotional expression.

The shaggy cave chieftain, sitting beside the fire of his clan, watched these primitive gyrations, and from them received a spark which kindled his sluggish imagination. So stimulated, he was able to plan primitive conquests and carry them out. The dancing had broadened his horizon. He recognized this, and so in that dim age the dancers' presents were the richest, the finest ornaments, the best food, and oftentimes the sacrifice of prisoners.

Through scores of centuries the dance held its supremacy and the dancer was the one who kept the lands of imagination from which mankind drew power and inspiration. Then came with his development the factors to stimulate man's mind. But the habit of the ages had given the dancer a power over man's subconsciousness that she still retains to-day. There was a sound psychological reason for the gift of John the Baptist's head to Salome.

And the man of today who sacrifices to come, family or throne, the dancer is simply swept away by primitive impulses which have persisted in him for thousands of years.

So reason a school of psychologists not to be taken lightly. I, however, do not agree with them upon all points.

In the case of the professional dancer we certainly have to do with a type that is destined to prove more or less of a temptation to susceptible males. In the first place, she is dangerous because of her surpassing beauty of face and figure. Without these assets she is not likely to qualify in the professional class. In the next place, the choice of this form of entertainment is in itself indicative of a nature that is ready to disregard the conventions. In making this assertion it must, of course, be understood that we are making due exception of those women of strong personality who have done so much to elevate the art of dancing. The reference here is to the other kind—those who cause trouble. The former uses her art to win admiration for her art. The latter develops her art to attract attention to and admiration for herself.

Given a woman of this type on the stage and a susceptible person before the footlights, and we have the necessary elements of a domestic disturbance. The determining factor—the flame to the powder—is supplied by the dance itself. For whatever of beauty and artistic effect may be claimed for the dance in its most highly developed form, the fact is that its ultimate appeal is to the fundamental instincts.

This assertion may seem to be rather extreme to those who are familiar with the dance only in its modern form—before the advent of the turkey trot, bunny hug and tango. These most recent developments, in the opinion of many, give some color to the statement, but to realize its full significance it is necessary to study the dance as it is practised among savage peoples of the present day. For these people typify the primitive practices and customs of nations that are now civilized, and it is a fact that some, at least, of the objectionable dances recently introduced are revivals of the cruder forms of earlier days.

Havelock Ellis, who cites dozens of examples from primitive customs, makes this interesting comment on the subject:

"As the highest and most complex form of muscular movement, it is the most potent method of obtaining the excitement muscular movement yields. Among savages this use of dancing works harmoniously with the various other uses which dancing possessed in primitive times, and which caused it to occupy so large and vital a part in savage life that it may possibly even affect the organism to such an extent as to mold the bones. As civilization advances, the other uses of dancing may fall away, but the art still remains a stimulant."

If the theory of the dance here given be true, it follows that the professional dancer who regularly gives herself up to its influence must be rendered particularly susceptible to the advances of her admirers. And the admirers, in turn, are scarcely less susceptible.

THE fact that the family of Thomas R. Williams, Jr., is rent in twain because Thomas R. Williams, Jr., has married Mme. De Beau, a charming dancer of Valeska Suratt's company, gives point to the psychologist's statement that dancers are natural disturbers of the family peace. They make more trouble in families than does any other class of women. The light toe creates more trouble in the household than the light purse or even the light head.

"When a dancer isn't breaking up someone's else family she kicks her own into splinters," said a bitter old cynic of Broadway. When a man disputed his statement the cynic recalled Nance Gwynn of the four husbands and who lives in anticipation of seven, because a fortune teller told her she would have that number of spouses. Miss Gwynn was named as correspondent in the divorce suit of Mrs. Charles Gilpin, Jr., so being drawn for a painful time into the vortex of trouble in one of the oldest families in Philadelphia. While dancer Bessie Clayton has never taken her troubles into the courts she is by no means reticent about the part dancer Louise Alexander has played in the shattering of her domestic idols. Living apart from her husband, Julian Mitchell, she points to the brunette dancer as the reason. Nor has Anna Held been any less communicative about dancer Lillian Lorraine as the villainess of her sad story of ties that were first grievously tangled, then sundered.

Mrs. Conway Tearle told a sympathetic judge the story of how Roberta Menges Hill, once known as the belle of Sheephead Bay, had danced her husband away from his hearthside, had all but kidnapped him, had indeed spirited him away, albeit with his connivance, to European shores. The judge was so sorry for Mrs. Tearle and so indignant with Roberta Menges that he granted Mrs. Tearle the divorce she craved.

Duse the compelling, the most marvelous of living actresses, lost the interest and it was believed the great of living Italian authors, to a sinuous enchantress, Ida Rubinstein, once premiere danseuse of the Russian ballet at the Grand Opera House of Paris.

The dancer Saharet proposes to marry her partner, Senor Florido, as soon as the male dancer disentangles himself from previous matrimonial bonds. Herr Frantzius, her husband, not waiting for this lightening of Florido's conjugal burden, named his wife's dancing partner in a successful suit for divorce. Herr Frantzius fell in love with the dancer's portrait and fell out of love with her temperament, which he said was made up of one hundred parts of volatility.

Dancer Bessie McCoy was not named in Mrs. Richard Harding Davis's suit for divorce. But no one has denied that her friendship of two years for the novelist widened the breach that existed between the author and his artist-wife. When the divorce was accomplished Miss McCoy became the second Mrs. Davis.

Odetta Valery, who stirred the admiration of Oscar Hammerstein, her impresario, by the romantic record of twenty-eight love affairs in one year, was the bogle woman to many unhappy Parisiennes. Never did the dusky-haired charmer with the alluring black eyes fail to inject a thorn into a matrimonial situation when she chose. Since misfortune has overtaken her and she is destitute in Paris she is still the cause of disturbing

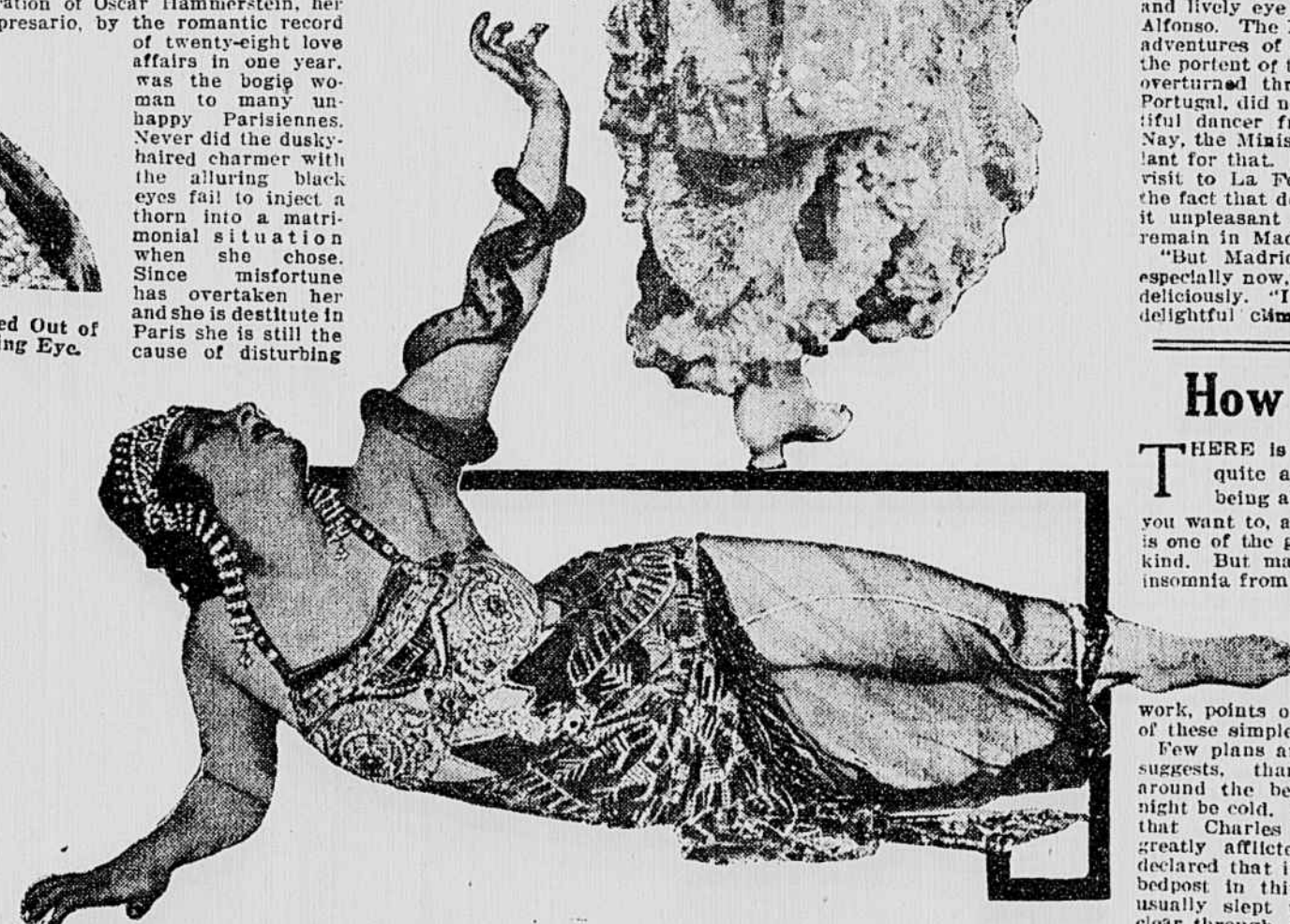
memories in the bosoms of many wives in the huge city of laughter.

Many a vaguely jealous wife has been disturbed by the flutter of Mlle. Dazle's ballet skirt and by the dash of her pink satin dancing pumps. But there stands no record of domestic disturbance against that dainty dancer save her own divorce from the young manager who brought her into fame as the Red Domino.

Not only in the kingdom of home, but in the wider realm of state have dancers ruled and overruled and disrupted. Lola Montez, reigning in Bavaria through the slavery of the King to her will, how Gaby Deslys, with the tip of her dainty toe, overturned the throne of Portugal and sent a kinglet as a mendicant suing for the favor of thrones is a story better known in this country than the terms of the revised tariff list.

Seventeen-year-old, brown-eyed, sunny-haired, L'Aerolia, dancer and daughter of a dancer, was driven out of Belgium by an indignant Queen. The Queen, incensed by a story told her by one of her ladies-in-waiting, that King Albert, meeting the dancer in the royal ballroom, rehearsing the dances with which she was that night to entertain the Belgian court, had kissed her, commanded that the same lady in waiting take her at once

Saharet
Who,
Briefly
Married
Herself,
Will
Marry
Her
Dancing
Partner,
Florido,
When
He
Secures
a
Divorce.



Odetta Valery, the Bogle Woman of Many Parisian Wives.

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Photo by
MOFFETT CUI.

Lillian Lorraine, the Beautiful Disturber of Anna Held's Domestic Peace.

out of the kingdom and back to Paris. There followed a glacial atmosphere between their Majesties of Belgium (not has continued, according to the court gossip, until the present day.

La Fornarina, the most beautiful dancer in Spain, attracted the roving and lively eye of her monarch, King Alfonso. The Ministry, alert to these adventures of that eye, and reading the portent of them in the light of the overturned throne of their neighbor Portugal, did not drive the most beautiful dancer from her own country. Nay, the Ministry was much too gallant for that. It paid a semi-official visit to La Fornarina. It deplored the fact that developments had made it unpleasant for La Fornarina to remain in Madrid.

"But Madrid is most delightful, especially now," La Fornarina sighed, deliciously. "I refer, of course, to the delightful climate of Madrid in the

Spring," she added, with a glance at a huge basket of red roses of a kind that grew only in the royal gardens. That was rendered unmistakable by the sashlike ribbon of the royal colors that encircled them.

"It will become less agreeable for the beautiful Fornarina. Indeed, we regret it exceedingly, that we know it will." The spokesman of the Ministry glanced out of the window of Fornarina's apartment at the palace. "It would be so much more pleasant, for example, if La Fornarina should show Paris the beautiful Castilian dances—barbarous Paris that has been content with the vulgar tango!"

La Fornarina's blue-veined lids lowered and veiled her eyes. She sighed. Then she smiled. That night she went to Paris. In Paris she has remained.

And then, of course, there was the justly famous Salome.

How Running Makes You Sleepy

THERE is nothing in the world quite as exasperating as not being able to go to sleep when you want to, and persistent insomnia is one of the greatest curses of mankind. But many people suffer from insomnia from lack of knowing many of the simple devices that have been used in the past to provoke sleep, and Sir James Sawyer, in a recent

work, points out how valuable some of these simple means have been.

Few plans are more successful, he suggests, than that of running around the bed, particularly if the night be cold. It will be remembered that Charles Dickens, who was greatly afflicted with sleeplessness, declared that if he could lean on the usually slept until he got chilled clear through, the return to a warm bed would produce a drowsiness that led him along the path of sleep. William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, was a believer in the circulation of the bed also. He declared that for sleepless-

ness nothing was better than to jump out of bed suddenly, as though frightened, race around the bed with very little on, until the skin was cold and the body heated and then jump back to bed. Not only was the exercise good, he believed, but also the feeling that one was being withheld from going to bed caused a desire for it, which prepared the mind for sleep when once more lying down.

Of course such devices as a hot pillow are well known—both George Washington and the present King of England could testify to their usefulness, and nightcaps—both of fabrics and liquids—have a soothing effect, externally and internally respectively. But, when all is said and done, nothing so well conquers insomnia as a sudden plunge out of bed into a cold room and a vigorous run around the bed or—if one be sure that others are asleep—up and down a corridor. Should the custom become prevalent, however, the halls of a large hotel might present a curious spectacle during the early hours of the morning.